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MEDICAL MISSIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

Prescribing in the Dispensary, Guanajuato, Mexico

The Good Samaritan Hospital, Guanajuato, Mexico

Medical Mission work has not been understood by those interested in the evangelization of the world. While Roman Catholics have used medical means everywhere, Protestants have confined their work almost exclusively to that of preachers and teachers. In the beginning, it was believed that medical missions should be opened only in heathen and pagan lands, where the Christian medical profession was unknown. For this reason, but little has been done in the so-called Christian countries where the Roman Catholic Church has predominated for hundreds of years. In these Latin countries, where Spanish and Portuguese are largely spoken, the people have thrown off the yoke of Spain, and large majorities have repudiated the Pope and his agents. The people call themselves Christians to indicate that they have a Christian civilization and to distinguish themselves from pagans and heathen, but they are really Christian neither in their knowledge nor in the practice of Scriptural teachings and virtues. In this they follow several millions in our own countrymen.

The necessity for medical work in Latin-America is precisely the same as in Africa, China, or India. Medical Mission work should be performed for the evangelization

of men and women. It should reach individuals and at the same time exercise an influence on society so as to open the way for a hearing and acceptance of the Divine message through the preacher and teacher. We *must* send doctors to many mission stations to care for the health of *missionaries*, but that is a selfish and precautionary measure. The *principal motive* for sending medical missionaries, is to minister to the people of the country whom we wish to help and save, both *physically and morally*.

There are three Protestant mission hospitals in Porto Rico, two in Mexico, one in Guatemala, and one in Brazil supported by the Brazilian Protestants. Only seven hospitals for almost a hundred million of Mexicans and Latin-Americans among whom the Protestant Mission Boards are working! It is practically impossible for a Protestant to be treated in a Roman Catholic hospital without consenting to confession and hearing mass; and most if not all of the government hospitals are in charge of Catholic doctors and nurses and the same treatment is accorded patients. The conditions in some of these countries beggar description. At every turn one is met by people greatly emaciated, covered with sores, or with broken limbs unset. From fifty to seventy-

five per cent of the children die at birth or before reaching the age of two. Except in the large cities, there is no sanitation and no knowledge of hygiene. The percentage of illegitimacy is unusually large, and venereal diseases and like conditions are almost unbelievable.

In a Ward of the Good Samaritan Hospital
Guanajuato, Mexico

MEXICO

Of these seven institutions of healing the Methodist Episcopal Church has but one hospital among Spanish speaking people. Yet we are working in Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Porto Rico, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentine and Uruguay. This hos-

pital is in Guanajuato, Mexico. Medical work was begun here in 1891, but hospital work was not begun until 1899. Over 100,000 sick have been served. The cost of this service during twenty-eight years has been over a half a million Mexican dollars, of which the patients themselves and other Mexican observers of the work have given more than a quarter of a million. Our Good Samaritan Hospital there with its scientific equipment is worth $115,000 (Mex.) all raised and paid for in Guanajuato. Our schools there have reached an annual matriculation of 400 students, where fanaticism had previously kept the number under 50; and our local church has received 1,600 persons into membership who were formerly Catholics. Our work in Guanajuato, which was languishing, has been made to prosper and that exceedingly, by the addition of the Medical Work.

The general public, as yet not fully evangelized, has been most favorably disposed toward us by the influence of our work of healing. This has been greatly extended in the surrounding territory by the publication of a health journal for a number of years, and also by health lectures, illustrated by stereopticon views in the State College, the theaters and lecture halls.

The demonstration made in Mexico has furnished us convincing proof of the adaptability of Medical Work to Latin America. It is now proposed to increase and develop this sort of work rapidly, not only in Mexico but in South America.

In the Operating Room, Guanajuato, Mexico

The work in Guanajuato is to be strengthened, and the $5,000,000 Protestant University soon to be established in Mexico City is to have, besides, a hospital to cost $1,600,000 and a Medical College to cost $500,000.

SOUTH AMERICA

Medical mission work by Protestant Churches has been entirely neglected in this

great continent, but the beginnings for a medical program have been included in the Centenary Survey. Hospitals will be located at Santiago, Chile, and Buenos Aires, while medical stations will be opened in Montevideo, Uruguay, Lima, Peru, and La Paz, Bolivia. Health centers will be established as rapidly as possible in all stations where we have missionary work. The medical program will include lectures on sanitation and hygiene in our schools and churches, and special attention will be paid to the examination of students in all of our institutions.

In connection with the Presbyterian Mission, a Nurses' Training School will soon begin work in Valparaiso, Chile, in which training and preparation will be given to deaconess nurses who will work through the different churches throughout the nation.

A new mission to the Indians in Bolivia has been projected and the first missionary will go out this Fall. A full staff for this Indian work will include a doctor and a nurse. A hospital will be necessary ultimately to carry on this work successfully.

There are many difficulties in the way of opening medical work in South America on account of the laws concerning the practice of foreign physicians and surgeons. As-

Street View of the Good Samaritan Hospital, Guanajuato, Mexico

surances have been given, however, that as soon as we are ready to begin medical work, it will be possible to secure the needed concessions and privileges from the Governments concerned.

Nurses in the Good Samaritan, Guanajuato, Mexico

As a beginning a dispensary has been opened in Santiago, Chile, through a generous gift from a brother in Chicago. Three doctors, two nurses, and one pharmacist

give their services free and there has been an average of forty cases on each dispensary day.

UNITED STATES

A Christian Medical School for the training of Medical Missionaries is most urgently needed in the United States, after the model of our Theological Seminaries and our other Mission Training Institutes. It is coming to be exceedingly difficult to provide a sufficiently large number of doctors imbued with the spirit of evangelistic missions, to supply adequately even the present needs of our foreign medical missions. Furthermore, all plans involving their great enlargement and multiplication compel us at once to cease depending wholly on the secular medical schools of the present day.

The Good Samaritan Hospital, Guanajuato, Mexico